

OPEN MIKE SESSION – MAY 17, 2003

PRESERVATION OF CITY STREET TREES PERIPHERY OF SAMUEL MADDEN  
HOMES REDEVELOPMENT SITE

Mayor Donley, Members of City Council:

I am asking for the preservation of 15 trees out of 61 trees on the periphery of the Samuel Madden Homes redevelopment site.

These trees are the property of the City of Alexandria and are going to be demolished through a City Permit. You have the authority to preserve these trees indefinitely.

I am asking consideration for:

1. the large sycamore on the corner of North Royal and Oronoco Streets because it is being evaluated for the status of "historic tree" by a national group. It is a mature tree, approximately 60 feet high with a diameter of 24 inches. A circumference of approximately 4 feet.
2. Seven trees on the east side of Princess Street between North Pitt and North Royal Streets because they are in excellent condition and were planted within approximately the last six years. They provide needed shade for the homes and balance of those on North Pitt Street.
3. Seven trees on the east side of North Pitt Street between Oronoco and Princess Streets because they are a compliment to a matching 7 on the west side of North Pitt. Those on the west side were easily and successfully preserved by the developer of the large townhomes on the west side of the street a few years ago in order to keep the symmetry of the street scape. It is appropriate to keep the canopy they create in tact and for the current builder, Eagen-Youngentub to return the favor to the homes on the opposite west side of the street that was originally extended to the Samuel Madden Homes on the east side.

I am asking you to preserve these 15 out of 61 trees indefinitely.

Thank you  
Sally Ann Greer  
1168 North Pitt St.  
Alexandria, VA 22314


2. Public 5/17/03  
Dis. (4)


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 24, 2003

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER 

FROM: EILEEN FOGARTY, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND ZONING 

SUBJECT: SAMUEL MADDEN TREES

At Council's May public hearing, following a citizen request for information on preservation of the trees at Samuel Madden, Council asked staff for a report on the status of the trees. Many adjoining residents of Samuel Madden also have expressed concern that all of the existing street trees and internal trees will be eliminated as part of the redevelopment of Samuel Madden.

Currently, the street trees and several internal trees are being retained during the demolition of the houses in these two blocks. These internal trees will be removed when on-site construction begins in September.

To address the issue of the long-term retention of the streets trees, we have again conducted site inspections with John Noelle, the city arborist, to evaluate the current health of the trees and their potential retention. There are several larger street trees that range in caliper from 16" to 36," with the most notable tree being a 26" caliper sycamore tree on Oronoco Street. The street trees have been severely pruned by the utility companies, and several of the trees are in a state of decline due to disease or stress. Moreover, the many Bradford Pear street trees, while attractive, have a propensity to split during storm or wind events due to their age and their weak branch structure.

Many of the street trees, such as the large sycamore, are desirable trees that contribute to the streetscape and crown coverage, reduce street noise, heat and dust, and provide urban habitat for wildlife. However, based on site inspections with the arborist and the configuration of the approved site plan, these street trees cannot be retained due to their close proximity to the units, the partially below grade parking that will be constructed for many of the units and the significant grading and filling that will occur on the site. The proposed units are to be constructed on the front property line, which provides only 10 feet between the units and the trunk of the street trees. The construction of the homes and foundations will sever most of the trees' existing root systems. In addition, the abandonment and installation of underground utilities including, sewer, water, gas, electricity, telephone and cable services, many which will come from the street, will further seriously disturb the trees' root systems.

As a result of these disturbances, it continues to be the conclusion of the arborist that none of the trees is likely to survive the construction process. These trees have been retained during the demolition process, but are planned to be removed during construction, which is expected to start in early September.

cc: City Council-elect  
Michele Evans, Assistant City Manager  
Sandra Whitmore, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities  
John Noelle, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities  
Jeffrey Farner, Planning & Zoning

Sent to CC, CM, Res. & Parks

F: 2(a) 5/17/03

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**June 30, 2003**

**To Mayor Donley, Mayor-elect Euille, Council Members and Council Members-elect**

**I am writing to you to request a special commendation for Mr. John Noelle, City Arborist, for his attention to detail, honesty and generous help in regard to the preservation of a specific sycamore tree at the redevelopment of the Samuel Madden Homes.**

**On Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Noelle spent over an hour with me in a telephone conversation regarding the trees at the site, as well as, the sycamore specifically. He offered to meet me at the site Monday, June 23, 2003, where we spent more than two hours examining each aspect of the plans concerning the site and their relationship to the sycamore tree.**

**Contrary to the memo you received June 24, 2003, the utilities are coming into the units from the back. The tree is 12 feet from the development located in the center of unit 53, on the corner of Oronoco and North Royal Street.**

**Mr. Noelle developed three levels of accommodation that could be made for the sycamore tree, as follows:**

**Most Simple: Erect protective barrier at the line of the current chain link fence that surrounds the property; move roof drain toward stoop, a small distance; add approximately 6 inches soil to increase grade in sidewalk in the area of the tree.**

**Less Simple: The above accommodations plus auger roof drain 20' either side of existing tree.**

**Least Simple: The above accommodations plus auger the roof drain and sanitary line for units 53, 53, 54.**

**There is no guarantee a tree will do well or survive major construction, however, this one is in excellent condition at this time.**

**Thank you for your consideration of my request.**

**Sincerely,**

*Sally Ann Greer*  
**Sally Ann Greer, President, NOTICE**

